

1988 OPEN FOUNDATION
AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

** JEANETTE DIXON**

RESEARCH PROJECT.

INTERVIEWER: JEANETTE DIXON
INTERVIEWEE: MOIA DeMARTIN

PAPER: WOMEN AT WORK IN INDUSTRY DURING WORLD WAR TWO.
AN INDUSTRY IN NEWCASTLE - STEWART AND LLOYDS.

Lecturer: Marg Henry
Thursday 10am - 12noon

JEANETTE DIXON

With the out-break of World War Two in 1939, Australia knew what to expect. They had already survived one World War so optimism was not high about how it would ultimately affect everybody's lives.

Conscription was introduced and the Federal Government tried to raise money for materials and equipment. As the need for weaponry increased so did the growth in industry. Industries expanded and prospered especially after the set back they encountered during the Depression.

In 1942 the Labour Prime Minister, John Curtin, implemented new controls over the workforce. Women who had never worked since being married were enticed back into the workforce. Women were ^{sought} sent to take over where men had left their jobs to go into the armed forces.

The Land Army was organised to employ young women and direct them to jobs where the need was greatest. The first men's jobs were offered as early as October 1940. In 1941 658,100 women were employed an increase of 15,000 since 1939. All women in wartime occupations were told their jobs would only continue for the duration.

In 1942 the Women's Employment Board was set up to rule on wages and conditions on women's jobs which were previously classified as "man's work". The W.E.B. only had power to grant wage rates on jobs that no fixed rates had existed before. It was unable to grant awards across the board. To receive equal pay to men women had to prove the value of their jobs.

In the metal trade women received 90% of wages, after a one month probation at 60%. In 1943 women employed in traditional women's jobs received only 54% of the basic male rate, and of the 800,000 women in the workforce at this time only approximately 90,000 benefited from the W.E.B. pay rate.

Appeals to women's patriotic spirit were used to try and encourage them to seek employment in factories. As the jobs in factories were classified as women's work the pay was low and the numbers required fell short. Labour in all the low-paying jobs was not available as women went for the higher pegged W.E.B. jobs.

At the beginning of the war a Manpower Committee was established to direct and organise the labourforce. In 1943 the Manpower Committee had its authority extended. It could now direct any person to any job and women were shifted into the low-paying jobs. In 1943 the first people were interviewed and sent out to work. All women who were childless and between the ages of 18 and 45 were told to register. A cheap supply of labour therefore became available to be shifted at the will of the Committee. If you disobeyed a direction made by the Manpower Committee penalties were severe.

At the end of the war women were forced out of men's jobs. Ex-service men were given preference when looking for work and women had to make way for them. Women were retrenched as they had expected because it was a pre-requisite of a large majority of war-time jobs. Women were exploited when the need was great for man-power but after the war they were once again relegated to the "womenly" aspect of life.

Industry in the Newcastle area during the war, expanded as it had through out Australia. One such industry was Stewart and Lloyds which had been established at the Newcastle site since 1934. They manufactured all types of steel pipe fittings and ship derricks.

Stewart and Lloyds, Newcastle, during the war were involved in the manufacture of equipment for the war effort. Munitions and shells were produced at the Newcastle firm. In 1940 the Special Purpose Plant commenced production. This plant produced shell forgings and gas cylinders.

In the Push Bench Mill machines were adapted to manufacture 6" Howitzer shells and large projectiles, as well as the usual tube sizes. Over one hundred thousand 6" Howitzer forgings, sixteen thousand 5.5" Mark111 hundred powder shells, over three thousand 6" naval high explosives Mark118 shell forgings were produced in the Push Bench Mill during the war production. "It should be noted that associated equipment to supplement the manufacture of munition and shells was bought at the company's own expense and on its own initiative."(1)

Many women were employed during the war and over 17% were engaged in the machining and finishing operations. The high level of production could not have been maintained without the employment of women.

In 1940 Stewart and Lloyds employed 1,190 people and by 1945 they employed 2,249. In 1945 the Special Purpose Plant ceased production and women doing men's work were retrenched when the need for war materials came to an end.

In 1946 Tubemakers of Australia Ltd. merged with Stewart and Lloyds(U.K.). So Stewart and Lloyds became a fully subsidiary of Tubemakers. It then changed to Tubemakers by name in 1977. It is now the biggest supplier of steel pipe in Australia.

(1) Author? Tubemakers of Australia Ltd. 1934-84., Newcastle, Nov.1984.

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1988 OPEN FOUNDATION HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT.

INTERVIEWER: JEANETTE DIXON

INTERVIEWEE: MOIA DeMARTIN.

Jenny: This is Jeanette Dixon and I am conducting an interview for the 1988 Open Foundation History course.

I am interviewing Moia DeMartin about her early life and her life in the Depression and in World War Two.

Moia could you please tell me where you were born and in what year?

Moia: Yes, I was born in Estell Street, Maryville, and on the 16th. April, 1918.

Jenny: And what was your maiden name?

Moia: Bowman.

Jenny: How many children were there in the family?

Moia: Five, three girls and two boys.

Jenny: Were you born in the house, or?

Moia: Yes, we were all born in the house.

Jenny: What did your father do for a living?

Moia: He was a tailor.

Jenny: How did the Depression affect your father's business?

Moia: Oh! It affected him very badly because um, before the actual crash in 1929, I think it was, things were getting a bit bad and there was murmurs of Depression and ah men weren't buying suits because people were tightening their belts and he was having time off work even before the Depression actually happened.

Jenny: So did his job finish in the Depression?

Moia: No, it never finished ah, what happened is that he died suddenly in the midst.

Jenny: How did your family get on without having a breadwinner?

Moia: We had nothing. There was no widows pension and ah I had two brothers that were ah indentured at the Dock Yard as Boiler Makers and ah Mum had the ah, say, just apprentices money until then, but not in the beginning, ah, they were taken away from high school, from a kindly man that lived opposite us, that was foreman at the Dock Yard, and decided Mum needed help. And that's how they became boiler makers, till, up till then, that's why he did it because Mum was destitute and there was no help.

- Jenny: Surely the government must of been able to help you in some way?
- Moia: Yes, well the only way they helped was, in the beginning my brothers would go down to a depot and they would get a bag of food which would be like ah, 1 lb. of dripping, and a tin of treacle and a few measly things that weren't great but that help a little and then later I don't know how much late they brought in the dole coupons. They weren't a lot either but we were able to hand those into the grocer and get some groceries for them, but is wasn't a great deal.
- Jenny: What did you do for clothes and shoes?
- Moia: We just had no clothes, well, well, when I say that, I suppose werwere helped out. People were good, those that were a bit better off would give us some hand-me-downs and ah thats about, although, I can remember wearing shoes about three sizes too big, and ah stuffing paper in the toes and being very grateful to wear them and I can't see my daughters doing that today, but ah, ah, that would be the only way that we could have any clothes because there certainly wasn't any coupons for clothes.
- Jenny: How did you pay the bills? The power bills and the electricity?
- Moia: Well , I'm not sure. I think the, the ah, government or council, whatever had to ah, put their thinking caps on because they weren't getting paid for the electricity bill or the gas bill, and ah, so they came up with an idea of meters and so we had a penny in the slot gas meter and a shilling in the slot ah, light meter, ah. And when that shilling ran out well we just lit candles. Ah, I think we must have always scrounged a penny from somewhere, because I can't remember us not being able to cook our food.
- Jenny: Ah. How old were you when you first got a job?
- Moia: Sixteen.
- Jenny: What year was that?
- Moia: Ah, that, oh you've already said that. Ah, 1934. I left school when I was 14. And um, so I was 16 and um I got a job at R. Hall & Sons. Packing peas and bottling vinegar and methylated spirits and all sorts of things. And I find it rather amusing that talking to my grandchildren now and even my children about ah, going for vocational guidance tests, and um, although they were miserable days. Now I can laugh and think that when I got that job at R. Hall & Sons all of the street were running up and down saying "Moia Bowman has gotta job", and you would think that I had just matriculated to University.
- Jenny: How long did you work there for?
- Moia: Oh, from 16 till 22.

Jenny: Was it a hard job?

Moia: No, no, not at all, it was just um a dead end job which you wouldn't take today nor would I if I had my life over again.

Jenny: What were the hours you worked?

Moia: I think we worked from um 8.00a.m. to 5.00p.m., um I'm not really certain about this but they were much longer hours 8.00a.m. to 5.00p.m. and ah, then we worked ah from 8.00a.m. to 12.00p.m. on a Saturday morning and um my wages were fifteen shillings a week.

Jenny: Was that, what was that compared to anybody else?

Moia: I don't know, I think that would be the average factory kid's wage anywhere at that time.

Jenny: Did you wear a uniform?

Moia: Oh no, no, nothing provided, oh no.

Jenny: Was there any danger involved in the job?

Moia: No except that I don't think it was a very healthy environment, it was a big damp old factory and a with concrete floors and ah, not a, no sunshine, not a very healthy atmosphere.

Jenny: Wheres that factory?

Moia: Well it was at Scott Street, Newcastle, almost up to the beach, later on they shifted it out to um Islington.

Jenny: What about lunch? Did you have, how long did you have for lunch?

Moia: I think we had an hour, I think so, we had a morning tea break.

Jenny: Did they have a canteen or anything there?

Moia: Oh, goodness no!

Jenny: Were there foremen in charge of the girls?

Moia: Yes, there was an older girl and um she was in charge, and um I don't think she had any more education than us but they just had to have somebody to keep us under control, I suppose you....

Jenny: Did they need someone to keep you under control?

Moia: I think perhaps a bit but, um, I think that we were all poor dreaded kids that were grateful for a job. I don't think we gave much trouble.

Jenny: And, did you leave because you got married?

Moia: Yes, I left to get married.

Jenny: What was that in 1940?

Moia: 1940, yes.

Jenny: How did you get to work?

Moia: Well at first I lived on a main road and there was a tram stop almost at the door, but um, bikes suddenly became very fashionable, had, up till then there weren't, there were no girls bikes and became a fashion. And I remember I had to pay my bike off at 5 shillings a week, the rest I had to give to my mother to help feed us and ah, whether it rained, hail or shone I had to ride the bike because I was using the tram fare I are, to pay the bike off.

Jenny: Did it make you bitter that you had so little?

Moia: No, I don't think so, because, I, we were all in the same boat and um, at my age it's startings the depression getting on the way, as a child I didn't know anything other than, them um struggle, and poverty, so um, I think that what it may have done to us was make us defeatists. That instead of having a bit of ambition, we just accepted our lot as though that was it and thats all we would ever have in life and um that is very true.

Jenny: Was your Mother better off with you working and your brothers work in their trade?

Moia: No, because what happened, because they were indentured at the dock yards they couldn't put them off and when they finished their trade they were put off immediately.

Jenny: What happened to them then?

Moia: Well, most of them, particularly my two brothers anyway lots did it, they went, what they call "going on the track" And um, my brothers had their bikes and they had um, the pants they wore, a jumper on the handle bars and they set off for Queensland. Any they just looked for work all along the way, or found shelters to go to, and um, therefore Mum was still just in that same position, my wages and I can't remember though because I was a bit young and in Jack Lang's day, I can't remember, Jack Lang a lot of people call him a communist, a red ragger, etc., but he did get the widows a pension.

Jenny: Can you remember when that was?

Moia: No, you see, because I think I was a bit young for Jack Lang's day, but perhaps a bit young to be interested in politics in that form. I only remember people talking about Jack Lang and how he got the widows a pension. But I can't remember what year that was.

- Jenny: What do you remember about the out break of World War Two
- Moia: Well I think I was a bit young to be dramatic about it and um, none of my brothers were in the army. But um I um, by this time I was um, working as a postgirl because all the men had gone away to the war and woman were doing men's jobs.
- Jenny: How did you feel about that?
- Moia: Well, I thought it was great, not because I wanted men to be killed in the war, I thought it was great to get out of the factory, because I had, had a silly young marriage and was on my own and had a little boy to keep at that stage and I thought it was rather good to get out of a factory which I had gone back to after the broken marriage and the open air and riding a bicycle, meeting people. And um I always thought that if I had a vocational guidance test when I was young maybe I would have been a good P.R. woman because I was a very successful post-girl, everybody liked me very much.
- Jenny: What was the Post Office you worked from?
- Moia: Mayfield.
- Jenny: And were there many working there.
- Moia: There, were, I was the first girl, then there was another girl came later, there were eight men.
- Jenny: H How did the men treat the girls?
- Moia: Not too bad, not too bad. I think, there, they might have thought it was a bit odd at first but they didn't, ah, well they, they treated us quite respectfully.
- Jenny: And did you have a uniform to wear?
- Moia: Oh! Yes, oh dear this was far removed from my factory days. I had on a peaked cap, and a blue skirt with PMG on it, and a navy blue skirt.
- Jenny: All supplied by them?
- Moia: Yes indeed! This was much up the ladder for me.
- Jenny: Can you remember the wages that you received?
- Moia: No, I really can't, I just know that they were much better. I don't even know, if we got full mans wage. I do know, that as a opposed to working in a factory they were much better wages.
- Jenny: Can you remember the hours?

Moia: Ah, oh roughly it was a funny thing the post run, you had to ah, I'm trying to think, I think we went to um I think we went about 7am. See in those days there were two runs, today a postman only does one run and most of them are on motorbikes. Makes me laugh, when I think of all the hills I've covered, up and down, um, and um, I think we went about 7am. and got out onto the street and delivered the mail about 9am. because we had to set up the mail and um, And as I said there were eight postman there and we had to set up your own run and throw the other postmans mail into pigeon holes and that. I think we started about 7am. if I remember rightly. And then we, um, it was up to us if we were speedy we could maybe have a couple of hours off for lunch depending on whether you were a fast worker. And then you would go back and your second run, you knew, I forget now there was a certain time you had to get back, for the second run. But I never ever got much time off because I talked to everybody over the fence. Because they found it a novelty to have a postgirl and unlike the men that used to just blow the whistle and shot off, they'd nab you and tell you all their troubles and oh no! You know I became quite a psychologist.

Jenny: And where was that Mayfield postoffice at?

Moia: It was on Maitland Rd., Mayfield. Up, um, oh dear let me think, I don't know whether it was Elizabeth St. or, no I'm not sure about that, it was up the top of Mayfield, past the Terminus. Past the Terminus. I can't think of the exact street, no, it was on the main road.

Jenny: And how long did you work there for?

Moia: I don't know, I think I worked there for about eighteen months.

Jenny: And then what happened?

Moia: Well, then a man came back from the army and he wanted to be a postman. When they came back, say they were given a choice of, you know, especially if they weren't particularly skilled and um, I had to just go because.....

Jenny: Was he a postman before?

Moia: No this one wasn't.

Jenny: Did you feel bitter about that?

Moia: No, I didn't really. I think I, there was no womens lib. in those days, and a, I don't think I'm, I don't think I still am a womens libber in that respect. Because there's a man away fighting for his country, surely he had a right to come back and be given a job?

Jenny: Hum.
When you were a postgirl what were the childcare facilities like?

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- Moia: Ha! Jenny, Jenny that shows how really young you are. Child care facilities, there was no such thing as childcare facilities. My mother minded my little boy, ah, we, we didn't have anything like...
- Jenny: Do you remember did they have child endowment?
- Moia: No, that came later. I can't remember when child endowment came either, ah, yes, no I, I can't remember that Jenny. I just know that when I left my husband, he was an alcoholic (I have to say), and um he did wander off, and actually it was up to me to look after my little boy and um, I, no there was no, there was no, I could never go somewhere and say "I am entitled to some help because I am alone and my husband had wandered off." But that made no difference, there was no where I could go to get some help.
- Jenny: Was there a stigma in those days being divorced?
- Moia: There was with me because I was a Catholic, and um, Catholic I, I don't think Protestant so much, but a little bit even with Protestants. And it didn't matter whether it was your fault or it wasn't, there was a little bit "Awe! She's divorced, or he's divorced." But I had no intentions of being divorced because I, I was a Catholic, Later on I changed my mind. Glad I did, because I wouldn't be sitting in this comfort today.
- Jenny: And, ah, when you lost your job at the postoffice what did you do then?
- Moia: I went to work in the industries. I worked at, ah, Stewart and Lloyds and I, ah, I worked on a machine that, ah, put a thread in ah, plumbers things, like eh elbows and taps and things like that; plumbers understand. And there was quite good money to be made there for women because you worked on a bonus system. If you got above your tally, well then you got a bonus.
- Jenny: Was this to do with the war effort?
- Moia: Yes, because once again they were short of men there too, So they, thats what we, all women as well as postwomen, they were all in the industries because they were short, industries were short of manpower.
- Jenny: How did the women feel about going into the industries?
- Moia: I think that they didn't mind it a bit, but they, but they were resentful that we weren't getting the same pay as men, and that. I, I was lucky, I was on a machine, although you had to be quick, ah, it wasn't heavy, but some girls that couldn't handle a machine perhaps, they were labourers. And they had to wheel great barrows of sockets and they were heavy and they had to shovel those sockets into bins far above there, say chest height. And, um, they went out on strike for a while and I always think this is a funny incident-- a Judge came to have a look at our conditions and there was rather a tough women there and ah, he happened to walk up

- Moia: (con'd) and she was unloading her barrow and she just put the shovel in his hand and said, "Have a go at that and see what you think?" I thought that was rather funny.
- Jenny: What happened, did they get the, ah, pay rise?
- Moia: I think they got a pay rise, by I remember, but I don't think we ever got full and equal money to them, I don't think so.
- Jenny: Were there men working the same shift as you?
- Moia: Oh, yes, and much the same work.
- Jenny: Was there animosity between you because they were getting higher wages?
- Moia: No, on the contrary, I think that, um, women in industries broke up a lot of marriages. Put a lot of women together and a lot of men; you've got a reasonably happily married man, hasn't thought about anything till they stick a whole lot of women with them and, ah, there was a, there was quite a few marriages that went wrong.
- Jenny: So there was a few scandals?
- Moia: Oh! Indeed! Yes I, I might like to add that I was completely free of sin.
- Jenny: Oh! Ofcourse.
Did many girls have abortions that you knew or worked with?
- Moia: No, none that I knew, or none that I worked with or, any of my friends had abortions, ah. But I used to hear girls, that eh, came from a certain suburb where ah, a lady was not famous, infamous I would say, for her abortions, the backyard abortions. And they used to be giggling, giggling and saying, "Ah, you know there was another few at old Ma So and So's place." Ere and ah, they seemed to be quite used to it, because they came from that suburb. Until then I was quite an innocent, I had ah, knew nothing about it, but it went on, most certainly it went on in quite a big way.
- Jenny: With the coming of war how did it effect your lifestyle?
- Moia: Well, with all the young, the are, ah I can't think, with all the um, industries working for the war effort, and um, them going into making ammunition and so forth, um, the things that we were used to getting, and perhaps it's quite laughable that when we were poor couldn't afford, ah, they were now, ah, we were now unable to get. Because for instance like silk stockings, they um, they were gone, and ah, because they weren't an essential thing, so, everybody went stockingless. Painted their legs, there was a certain paint you could buy to paint your legs.
- Jenny: Painted your legs?

Moia: Yes, painted our legs. But you didn't have to, and even if a person went to a, to a very special dinner, not that we were that well off to ever go to special dinners but even if you were invited to go to a wedding it was quite in order to go stockingless.

Jenny: Because it was accepted?

Moia: Yes, because everybody went, you could not buy things, and once again like we were issued with a dole coupon to help us from starving we were now issued with coupons to curtail our buying. That we were given 'x' amount of coupons for clothing, and when we, our coupons were finished it didn't matter how much money you had in your pocket, that was it, you couldn't buy without your coupons.

Jenny: Was there a black-market?

Moia: Yes.

Jenny: And how did you get in contact with them?

Moia: Aw, aw, I don't know because I don't think I was ever really very well off, so I you know, I wasn't, I wasn't into the blackmarket or anything. I was still going along that same kid that came from the factory with that calm acceptance. Ha! Ha!

Jenny: Ha! So what did you do for night life?

Moia: We went to dances, we went to, um, oh Newcastle had lots of, ah, venues for dances. There were church hall dances and there were other places, like Trades hall, dance-hall.

Jenny: Were there army men there?

Moia: Sometimes, yes.

Jenny: Were there many men around at all?

Moia: Oh, yes, oh yes. There was always men around to dance with. Any place as far as I can remember, but um, I suppose lots of men couldn't go in the army, or they were doing essential work and perhaps others didn't pass the health test etc. But um, there wasn't a shortage of men like to dance with or anything like that.

Jenny: Were there trams around still in the war time?

Moia: Oh, yes. Ah, I don't know where, I don't remember when the trams finished but it was much later on after the war, the trams were finished.

Jenny: Did they go all the way from the Mayfield area into, into town?

Moia: Well that why we called it the Terminus, at Mayfield, thats where the trams stopped. Now Mayfield has grown much bigger

- Moia: (con'd) and the shops have gone further along, but that was the Terminus and that's where the trams stopped. And then it went from the Terminus straight on into town, at the top of town.
- Jenny: Did they have buses running too?
- Moia: Yes. In Maryville, where I lived you only had to walk up to the corner for the tram. It went down Downy St. and through Wickham and into, um, town and then Lewis St. Maryville that went parallel to ours, they had a bus-stop there and a bus ramp, you could take your pick.
- Jenny: Was Maryville very big suburb?
- Moia: No, I wouldn't call it, not large, it um, it was squashed in, I would say, more, that it was squashed in between Tighes Hill, Islington and Wickham. It was squashed in between those suburbs.
- Jenny: Have you been back to Maryville in recent times?
- Moia: I went back a few years ago, with my second husband, um, he had a job, ah, in Wickham and I asked him would he drive home and drive up Estell St., just for a touch of nostalgia and um, I got quite a lump in my throat. The little street looked the same and our home hadn't had any renovations, it just looked tidy and painted and neat.
- Jenny: Was it curbed and guttered when you were there?
- Moia: Yes, um, possibly not when my parents first went there, but ah, by the time I was old enough to remember we had curbs and guttering in Estell St.
- Jenny: How big were the yards?
- Moia: Rather big. We had, ah, a very small house, our house was -n't big enough. I suppose Mum and Dad allowed that they would put more on to it and didn't get around to it. But, ah, the yard, see everybody had rather a big backyard. The kids had plenty of place to play in the yards.
- Jenny: Did they play in the streets too?
- Moia: Oh, yes. We played cricket with a kerosene tin. See the traffic wasn't around. We had a kerosene tin for a wicket and we would only, just on a rare occasion, would have to cart the kerosene tin away while a car went past and put it back and get on with our cricket match. We played marbles in the street and that. We, we, really, well not like street kids that I mean, meaning rough street kids, it was normal, cause our parents were there. There was no television, no radio, and parents, I, I think it was a happier atmosphere had people not been so deprived. That people were more friendly. Parents, mothers and fathers on summer nights leaned over their fences and talked to their neighbours and us kids played in the street and hoped our, our parents would get involved longer in conversation, you know you wouldn't be brought in.

Moia: (con'd) But it was a very healthy and, um, happy, that part of it, happy atmosphere. I, I think now everybody anti-social because they want to look at their favourite television show. And I, I, think they were, if I could go back and not be and have the deprivation I think that our raising was more wholesome and healthy then what it is today, with kids with their eyes glued to television sets for far too long. I think its done a lot of good for kids in some ways, but not in others.

Jenny: Anyway Moia thanks very much I've really enjoyed my interview with you.

Moia: My pleasure Jenny. It was a touch of nostalgia anyway.

Jenny: Thankyou.

Regional History Research Project.

Summary of interview with Moia DeMartin by Jeanette Dixon.

Moia DeMartin (nee Bowman) was born on the 16th. April, 1918. She was born in her family home at Estelle Street, Maryville. Moia was one of five children, three girls and two boys.

With the onset of the Depression the Bowman family found it financially difficult as Moia's father, who was a tailor, received very little work due to the fact that people were using their money for the necessities of life. Added to their already financially unstable lifestyle the family was burdened with the sudden death of their father, who was the sole breadwinner of the family at that time.

Moia's brothers were forced to seek employment to support the family as there was no widow's pension or government assistance available in the early 1930's. A family friend secured apprenticeships for both boys at the State Dockyard. They held these positions for the period of their apprenticeships but were immediately sacked when they came out of their time. They found it impossible to find other employment in the Newcastle area, so they packed their belongings onto the handlebars of their bikes and "went on the track" to look for any work available.

During the Depression Moia remembers that they were given dole coupons so they could receive certain food items. Also meter boxes were installed in homes so that gas and electricity could be paid for as it was used.

When Moia was sixteen years old, in 1934, she got her first job, bottling and packing goods at R. Hall & Sons. All the street rejoiced at the news of her job, and she continued to work there for six years.

Moia was married in 1940 and left her job to become a "wife and mother". During her first marriage she had one son. Moia's marriage ended in 1943, and she was once again forced to seek employment. Due to the lack of government assistance for deserted wives, she had no alternative but to leave her small child in the care of her mother, to earn a living.

Due to the fact that the majority of men were at the war, Moia had the opportunity to gain employment as a postgirl. She enjoyed this position with the good money, the open air and the friendly working conditions. She held this position for eighteen months, then her position was offered to an unskilled ex-serviceman returning from war. Moia felt no bitterness at this and just accepted it as his right to a job after fighting for his country, although she had a child to support herself.

Because of the lack of manpower women were still desperately needed to work in the industries, where Moia had no problem finding a job at Stewart and Lloyds. Even though they were needed, women in industries rarely received equal pay to men. Moia witnessed some resentment amongst the women due to the lower wages the women received, and some industrial disputes took place during her employment at Stewart and Lloyds.

Moia found that the mixing of men and women in the factories caused a lot of marriage breakups and scandals.

The girls of her day were aware of abortions, and there was the certain few who seemed very well informed with the practice of backyard abortions. Although Moia was not aware of anyone she knew of having an abortion.

With the coming of the war there was the shortage of goods. Moia found it ironic that although money was now available people were once again issued coupons, but this time as a deterrent to excessive buying, and not due to the lack of money as in the depression. She recalls clearly that stockings were impossible to buy and it became an accepted practice to paint your legs or go stockingless. There was a blackmarket for some goods, but this was only available to the people that could afford it.

During the war the entertainment of the day consisted of various dances around the Newcastle area, and there always seemed to be the available dancing partner.

Public transport during the war consisted of trams and buses, which serviced the area of Maryville, where Moia lived. Maryville was a small suburb between Tighes Hill, Islington and Wickham. Moia recalls the streets being curbed and guttered. The houses were quite small and the yards were generally large, the suburb having a friendly family atmosphere, where the children played safely on the streets.

Moia's nostalgic walk back in time has led her to the conclusion that life was more wholesome and family orientated then today. She believes television has played a major part in shaping the children of today. This is not to say it has had a detrimental affect on them but it has definitely moulded today's generation.

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UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE

1988

I, Maia De Marten give my
permission to Jeanette Dixon

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research, publication and/or broadcasting (delete one of
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for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed Ma De Marten

Date 26.8.88

Interviewer J. Dixon

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